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# THE GULL



Golden Gate Audubon Society    Berkeley, California    Volume 69    Number 11    December 1987

## GGAS JANUARY MEETING

While GGAS will hold no monthly meeting in December because of the Christmas Bird Counts, please keep Jan. 14 open for our monthly meeting in San Francisco. We will feature a program on raptor migration observation and banding at the Marin Headlands. Alan Fish, coordinator of the project will lead the discussion. More details will appear in the Gull for January.

## FIELD TRIPS CALENDAR

**Saturday, December 5—Monterey Bay and Coastal Areas.** See November Gull for details.

**Sunday, December 6—Shorebird identification at various locations in Point Reyes National Seashore.** Meet at the Knave of Hearts Bakery at 8 a.m. in Inverness Park, Sir Francis Drake Blvd. We will decide exactly where to go from there. Bring scopes if you have them, lunch, liquids, and comfortable walking shoes. Leader: Lina Jane Prairie (549-3187). (✓)

**Saturday, December 12—Bollinas Lagoon.** Meet at 8:30 a.m. along Hwy. 1 at the turnoff to Bollinas at the north end of the lagoon. (This is north of the town of Stinson Beach.) Bring lunch, scopes, rain gear and high boots suitable for wet conditions. We will bird Bollinas Lagoon, the Pine Gulch Creek area, and the Duxbury Reef overlook. We may see as many as 80 species. Leader: Richard Ives (707) 996-2731. (✓)

**Saturday, January 9—Stockton, Lodi, and Thornton.** Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Stockton sewage ponds at the main gate. From the Bay Area take Hwy. 580 to Hwy. 4 (Charter Way in Stockton). Go west on Hwy. 4 about 1.5 miles to the entrance to the sewage ponds, then caravan to the Lodi sewage ponds and to Thornton to look for cranes. Dress warmly and be prepared for rain. Bring lunch. Leader: David Yee (209-951-1526). (✓)

**Sunday, January 10—Dillon Beach.** Meet at 7:45 a.m. at the Larkspur Ferry Terminal, section H (just east of the Sir Francis Drake off-ramp from Hwy. 101). We will leave there promptly at 8:00 a.m. for the town of Tomales where we will stop by the old Bank of America building on Hwy. 1 at 9:00 a.m. to meet the people from west Marin. From there we will continue to caravan to Lawson's Landing (entrance fee). Bring lunch, warm clothes, rain gear, and a scope if you have one. We may see three species of Loons, Red-necked Grebes, White Pelicans, Brants, and Snowy Plovers. Golden Plovers are regular on this trip. Leader: Mary Louise Rosegay (386-1640). (✓)

## FIELD TRIPS CALENDAR (continued)

Carpooling arrangements can be made for trips marked (✓). Call Kate Partridge at 236-7022 and leave a message. She will call you.

Trips marked with \$ go to parks or other sites which require an entrance fee.

Problems: If you have difficulty getting in touch with a field trip leader or need additional information regarding a trip call the GGAS office (843-2222).

—FIELD TRIP COMMITTEE

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Experienced birders, novices, backyard and arm-chair birdwatchers, attention! Now is the time to count all those birds you've been enjoying all year long. Join us for a day in the field, or watch the birds in your yard, and help with the winter bird census. Those of you who participated last year should have received a letter with details of the count, and a T-shirt order form by this time. If you have not, or if you are new to this experience and would like to help, please phone the GGAS office,

### Golden Gate Audubon Society CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT '87



Brown Towhee Capitol  
of the World  
Oakland, California

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843-2222 and request information, or phone the compilers and sign up.

**OAKLAND: Sunday Dec. 20.** The count-down dinner is at a new location this year. Please read your information letter carefully. See you Sunday the 20th! Compiler: Helen Green (526-5943).

**SAN FRANCISCO: Monday, Dec. 28.** The count-down dinner will be at Golden Gate Park's Hall of Flowers. Compilers: Dan Murphy (564-0074) and Alan Hopkins (664-0983).

**POINT REYES: Saturday, Dec. 19.** The Point Reyes Bird Observatory's Annual Christmas Bird Count compiler, David Wimpfheimer, would like to encourage you to participate! Call him at PRBO, 868-1221, for more information.



## DO YOU WANT ONE?

We think these T-shirts are great. We like them so much that we are considering printing totebags or frameable posters. How do you feel about that? If enough of us would like to get these Brown Towhees on a totebag or as a poster we will investigate the costs. So please, either drop us a line or call the office (843-2222) and tell us what you think.

## OBSERVATIONS

### September 23 through October 26

Astounding numbers of landbirds arrived during the period, and amazing warm-water species graced coastal waters. All of this was great for bird watchers, less pleasant for many of the misguided birds, and absolutely back-breaking for the RBA compiler and the Obs. Ed. SE Farallon biologists remarked on several impressive waves of migrants, but Oct. 13-16 was outstanding, with 103 species present on Oct. 14. "During this period the wind finally switched from Northwest to South, and the skies were overcast with moderate visibility—classic conditions for arrivals." (Many thanks to PRBO for all SE Farallon Island information.)

### Tubenoses through Hawks

Unusual in October was a Laysan Albatross Oct. 17 on a Monterey pelagic trip (*fide* SFB). One Northern Fulmar was seen on a pelagic trip out of Bodega Bay Oct. 11 (RS). Seven Flesh-footed Shearwaters were found: one near Bodega Canyon Oct. 11 (RS), three on a Monterey pelagic trip Oct. 18 (SFB), and two west of Duxbury Reef Oct. 25 (ToJ). Buller's Shearwaters appeared in average numbers throughout the month, with a high count of 1,000 observed from the Pt. Reyes Lighthouse Oct. 22 (DAH, et al.). Short-tailed Shearwaters were found on four ocean trips: two Oct. 10 out of Monterey (SFB, DDK), six out of Bodega Bay Oct. 11 (RS, BDP), two near the Farallones Oct. 11 (WC), and eight out of Monterey Oct. 18 (SFB). A **Manx/Townsend** type Shearwater was seen on a pelagic trip out of Monterey Oct. 5 (RS). This is a difficult group to separate, with many taxonomists not in agreement, but if iden-

tified as to species it would represent the first record for the north Pacific Ocean. Only one Wilson's Storm-Petrel was seen on a pelagic trip out of Monterey during the week of Sept. 29–Oct. 6 (SJ). Leach's Storm-Petrels were found on a trip to the Cordell Bank Sept. 27 (SJ), and ten were noted on a trip to the Davidson Seamount Sept. 27 (JM). An Ashy Storm-Petrel off Hayward Landing Oct. 22 (RJR) was very surprising. Two Least Storm-Petrels were in a flock of 5,000 storm-petrels on a Monterey pelagic trip Oct. 5 (RS).

A **Red-billed Tropicbird** was observed near the Davidson Seamount Oct. 5 (SJ). A dark-phased **Redfooted Booby**, discovered with the salmon fishing fleet off Bolinas Oct. 13 (RTh, et al.), rode fishing boats to Sausalito for several days, returning to the ocean each afternoon. On Oct. 16 the bird was seen at Fisherman's Wharf, and two days later it turned up at Aquatic Park, San Francisco, in such poor condition that it was taken to the Marin Wildlife Center. They discovered a fish hook in its mouth and found that the bird weighed less than two pounds. At last report the booby was serious but stable condition, with hopes for release in early November (*fide* JM). Another **booby**, possibly a **Red-footed**, landed on the rigging of a research vessel in Monterey Bay Oct. 8 (*fide* SJ). It is hoped that photographs may positively identify the bird.

The first Eurasian Wigeon of the fall was spotted at Rodeo Lagoon Oct. 11 (WEH). A Ring-necked Duck reached SE Farallon Oct. 7–8 for a first Island record. An Oldsquaw was found at Caspar State Beach Oct. 11 (KFC). Marin Headlands hawk watches at Hawk Hill 129 tallied 103 Broad-winged Hawks to Oct. 17 (CLF).

## Shorebirds

Two Mountain Plovers were near the intersection of Durham and Christie Roads in Fremont Oct. 14 (RJR). The last report of Baird's Sandpiper was of two at Pescadero Marsh Oct. 5 (CGR). Pectoral Sandpipers continued to be seen throughout the period with big congregations in several locations: 50 near Santa Rosa Creek, Sonoma Co. Sept. 26 (NTC), 25 at Sebastopol Sewage Ponds the same day (RoM, *fide* NTC), and 38 at Pescadero marsh Oct. 1 (PJM). A Stilt Sandpiper visited Zmudowski State Beach and Pajaro Dunes Sept. 17–24 providing Santa Cruz Co. with its first record of this species (DLSu, mob). The only Buff-breasted Sandpiper noted this fall was at Abbott's Lagoon Sept. 24 (ASH). The Ruff at Sandpiper Pt. remained at least to Oct. 4 (MB).

## Jaegers through Alcids

All three species of jaeger were seen regularly on pelagic trips and irregularly from the coast during the month. Ten Pomarines seen from Pt. Reyes Lighthouse Oct. 22 (DAH) was a good count. A Parasitic Jaeger at San Lorenzo Creek mouth Oct. 24 (RJR), and a Long-tailed Jaeger at Moonglow Dairy Oct. 3–4 (RS) were the only reports of these species away from the immediate coast. Small numbers of South Polar Skuas were seen on most pelagic trips from Humboldt to Monterey Co., with five to seven on a Bodega Bay pelagic trip Oct. 11 (RS) being the highest number found. "Some" to "numerous" Sabine's Gulls were noted off the coast during the report period (RS, BDP, SJ), and two Sabines' Gulls were seen in on-shore locations: an immature at the Palo Alto Baylands duck pond from Sept. 26 to at least Oct. 10 (GHo, et al.), and one at Pescadero Marsh Oct. 6 (mob). An

Arctic Tern was a Sulphur Creek mouth in Hayward Oct. 22, and there was another sighting along Hayward shoreline Oct. 24 (both RJR), one bird or two? Two Xantus' Murrelets of the race *scrippsi* and one *hypoleucus* were seen on a Monterey pelagic trip Oct. 10 (RS), and the same combination was seen out of Monterey Oct. 10 (SFB). Craveri's Murrelets were found on two Monterey pelagic trips: four Oct. 9 (SJ), and seven Oct. 10 (SFB).

### **Doves through Vireos**

All the ranches, the Lighthouse, and the Fish Docks noted below are at Pt. Reyes National Seashore. A White-winged Dove was at the Lighthouse Oct. 11 (JM, et al.). One Long-eared Owl found the Lighthouse Oct. 20 (RS). Single Short-eared Owls were at four locations: one at SE Farallon Sept. 26 (ToJ), one at Abandoned Ranch Oct. 11 (DN), one at Hawk Hill on Oct. 19 and on Oct. 24, (CLF, RS). A Northern Saw-whet Owl, visited SE Farallon Oct. 15-20 for the Island's ninth record. A Least Flycatcher was at the Fish Docks Oct. 7 (RS), and another reached Mendoza Ranch "annex" Oct. 11 (JM). SE Farallon had two Least Flycatchers: one arrived Oct. 9 and drowned at sea; the other arrived Oct. 20. Four Tropical Kingbirds reached our area: one at Asilomar Golf Course Oct. 10 (SFB), one at Middle Lake in Golden Gate Park Oct. 10 (JM), one on SE Farallon Oct. 14-19, and one at the Carmel River mouth Oct. 15-16 (BCh, *fide* JM).

Mountain Corvids showed up coastally in Marin Co. One Pinyon Jay was along the road to the Lighthouse Oct. 4-5 (JM, et al.), only the third record for Marin Co., and four were over Hawk Hill Oct. 21 (CLF). Single Clark's Nutcrackers were at the Fish Docks Oct. 15-17 (RS), Hawk Hill Oct. 17 (BiL), and in Tiburon Oct. 21 (HM). A **Dusky Warbler** reached SE

Farallon Oct. 14. This is the second record for the Island and only the third sighting in North America away from the Aleutians. A Western Bluebird surprised SE Farallon biologists Oct. 14-15, a first Island record. A Gray-cheeked Thrush found SE Farallon Oct. 9, a tenth Island record. A Brown Thrasher was at SE Farallon Sept. 25, and another was banded at Coyote Creek Riparian Station Oct. 3 (LRM). A **Sprague's Pipit** arrived at SE Farallon Oct. 16. This is a third record for the Island. Two Solitary Vireos of the eastern form were found this fall: one in Inverness Oct. 1 (RS), and another at Mendoza "annex" Oct. 8 (JM). Reports of a Philadelphia Vireo at the Carmel River Sept. 17 (DLSu, et al.), and a Red-eyed Vireo at New Brighton State Beach Sept. 11 (DLSu), reached me too late for inclusion last month. One Red-eyed Vireo was at the Lighthouse Oct. 15-17 (RS, et al.).

### **Eastern Vagrant Warblers**

Outrageous numbers of sightings reached us this month. In sorting out how many warblers I was confronted with I attempted to apply the DeSante & Ainley (1980, *Studies Avian Biol.* 4) rules for estimating individuals at given locations: all individuals present on a given day are presumed to be those present on the preceding day (unless there has been an increase in number), and an individual must go unrecorded only one day to establish the arrival of a new individual. This was tempered with extent of coverage and allowance for "ranch-hopping" by the birds (the Bailey "conventions") to arrive at some numbers.

The following table lists 271 individuals (385-6 for fall) of 21 species (23 for fall). These numbers represent the best season since 1979, and are only part of the story, as PRBO provided data only on "significant species," leaving out some of the more common

eastern vagrants from SE Farallon. Other data reached me too late for inclusion last month and is included here. The largest landbird waves arrived Oct. 7-11, 13-15, but every weekend in October provided significant sightings. I have consolidated the Pt. Reyes information and used inclusive dates for some species to save space.

Otherwise, the table is organized in the same fashion as last month. Please contact me if you need more complete details, as it rests in the computer.

#### **Tennessee Warbler (total 6; 19 for fall)**

1 Sunset Beach Marsh	Sept. 24,25	DLSu, RMo
1 Pajaro River	Sept. 25	DLSu
2 Pt. Reyes	Oct. 9,10	RS;BDP
1 Carmel Rvr. mouth	Oct. 14-18	EHa, BCh
1 Golden Gate Park	Oct. 19	MBu

#### **Northern Parula (total 5, 7 for fall)**

1 Neary's Lagoon	Sept. 15	DLSu, et al.
1 American River	Sept. 20-27	SeH
2 Lincoln Park, S.F.	Sept. 24; Oct. 18	DLEd;JMcC
1 SE Farallon	Oct. 6	PRBO

#### **Chestnut-sided Warbler (total 15, 23 for fall)**

4 Pt. Reyes	Sept. 22-24; Oct. 7;10	MLR,PLaT, RMS; BHo;RS
1 Big Sur Rvr. mouth	Sept. 26	JML
1 Golden Gate Park	Sept. 27-Oct. 1	DEQ;JM
1 Bodega Bay	Sept. 27	WEH
4 SE Farallon	Oct. 1-13	PRBO
1 Robinson Canyon	Oct. 3-4	RS
1 Fitzgerald Marine	Oct. 9	RSTh
1 Muir Beach	Oct. 15-17	DAH;DWm
1 SF Bay NWR	Oct. 24	HG, et al.

#### **Magnolia Warbler (total 9, 19 for fall)**

4 Pt. Reyes	Oct. 7-13	RS et al.
2 SE Farallon	Oct. 9-14	PRBO
1 Ft. Funston	Oct. 11	DL
1 Muir Beach	Oct. 15	DAH
1 Carmel Rvr. mouth	Oct. 15	BCh

#### **Cape May Warbler (total 3, 4 for fall)**

2 Pt. Reyes	Oct. 7;15-17	RS;mob
1 SE Farallon	Oct. 9	PRBO

#### **Black-throated Blue Warbler (total 19)**

8 Pt. Reyes	Sept. 25; Oct. 5-20	EDG; GFi, RS,DN
7 SE Farallon	Sept. 29-Oct. 15	PRBO
2 Golden Gate Park	Oct 3-8; 10	CKf;SFB

1 Marin Headlands	Oct. 17	BiL
1 SF Bay NWR	Oct. 20	RJR

#### **Black-throated Green Warbler (total 5)**

3 Pt. Reyes	Oct. 9 (2); 20	RS,MLR; RS
1 Golden Gate Park	Oct. 11,12	JM
1 Carmel Rvr. mouth	Oct. 18	MJL

#### **Blackburnian Warbler (total 4, 5 for fall)**

2 Pt. Reyes	Oct. 7-9; 13	RS; DDK
1 SF Bay NWR	Oct. 13	RJR
1 Carmel Rvr. mouth	Oct. 18	MJL

#### **Pine Warbler (total 1)**

1 Pt. Reyes-Mendoza	Oct. 15-17	RS,mob
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(first confirmed mainland record for northern California)

#### **Prairie Warbler (total 4, 5 for fall)**

1 Carmel Rvr. mouth	Sept. 26	JML
1 Moss Beach	Oct. 7-21	JM,PJM
2 Pt. Reyes	Oct. 9; 13-14	RS;DWm

#### **Palm Warbler (total 114, 124 for fall)**

5 Sonoma Co.	Sept. 27-Oct. 18	mob
86 Marin Co.	Sept. 24-Oct. 25	mob
6 San Francisco Co.	Sept. 25-Oct. 21	mob
1 Alameda Co.	Oct. 15	RJR
7 San Mateo Co.	Oct. 4	mob
3 Santa Cruz Co.	Sept. 22-28	DLSu
6 Monterey Co.	Sept. 18-Oct. 18	mob

(Up to 20 Palms on one day occurred at SE Farallon, *fide* RS.)

#### **Bay-breasted Warbler (total 3, 4 for fall)**

2 Pt. Reyes	Sept. 25; Oct. 15	EDG; RS
1 Bolinas	Oct.21-26	KH

#### **Blackpoll Warbler (total 29, 58 for fall)**

4 Carmel Rvr. mouth	Sept. 19; Oct. 14-17	DLSu;EHa Bch, <i>fide</i> SFB
15 Pt. Reyes	Sept. 22-Oct. 20	mob
1 Stafford Lake	Sept. 24	RS
1 Little Sur Rvr. mouth	Sept. 27	JML
1 Neary's Lagoon	Sept. 28	JZa
1 Pescadero	Oct. 3	RSTh
1 Bodega Bay	Oct. 4	RoM,NTC
2 Princeton	Oct. 10	PJM
1 Fitzgerald Marine	Oct. 10	DKe
1 Golden Gate Park	Oct. 11	JM
1 Bolinas	Oct. 24	RJ

#### **Black-and-white Warbler (total 15, 25 for fall)**

4 Golden Gate Park	Sept. 26-Oct. 12	DPM, et al.
1 Lake Merced	Sept. 26	JPe,DPM
5 Pt. Reyes	Oct. 7-Oct. 24	RS, DAH

1 Muir Beach	Oct. 15	DAH
1 Carmel Rvr. mouth	Oct. 17	<i>fide</i> SFB
2 Stinson Beach	Oct. 22-25	RS;JM
2 SF Bay NWR	Oct. 25	RJR
<b>American Redstart (total 21, 62-63 for fall)</b>		
2 Carmel Rvr.	Sept. 19-20;	DLSu,mob;
	Oct. 4	THK
1 Rodeo Lagoon	Sept. 22	JCo
4 Golden Gate Park	Sept. 22-	DLEd,SMu,
	Oct. 18	JMcC
2 Pajaro Rvr.	Sept. 25	DLSu
3 Pt. Reyes	Sept. 26-	JR,SFB,
	Oct. 14	RS,DWm
1 Lincoln Park	Oct. 2	ASH
1 Hayward Reg.		
Shore Pk	Oct. 2	RJR
7 SE Farallon	Oct. 12-15	PRBO
<b>Worm-eating Warbler (total 1, 2 for fall)</b>		
1 SE Farallon	Oct. 16	PRBO
<b>Ovenbird (total 5, 7 for fall)</b>		
4 Pt. Reyes	Oct. 9-15	RS,KH
1 SE Farallon	Oct. 14	PRBO
<b>Northern Waterthrush (total 7, 13 for fall)</b>		
1 Coyote Cr. Riparian	Sept. 3	LRM
2 Carmel Rvr. mouth	Sept. 19-20;	DLSu,
	Oct. 3	mob; <i>fide</i>
		BLaB
2 Golden Gate Park	Sept. 26;30	DPM,EC;JM
1 Fitzgerald Marine	Oct. 4	DKe
1 Bodega Rail Pond	Oct. 10	RS
<b>Kentucky Warbler (total 1)</b>		
1 Coyote Cr. Riparian	Sept. 18-29	LRM
<b>Connecticut Warbler (total 3, 4 for fall)</b>		
1 Coyote Cr. Riparian	Sept. 2	LRM
1 Pt. Reyes	Oct. 9	RS
1 SE Farallon	Oct. 12	PRBO
<b>Mourning Warbler (total 1, 4 for fall)</b>		
1 SE Farallon	Oct. 13	PRBO

## More Landbirds

A Summer Tanager was at Mendoza Ranch Oct. 15 (RS, mob), and one reached SE Farallon Oct. 16. Another was at the Lighthouse Oct. 19 (DWm). A Scarlet Tanager visited the Carmel River mouth Oct. 11-17 (*fide* BBrr, MJL). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was on SE Farallon Oct. 14; another was reported from Strybing Arboretum Oct. 22 (*fide* JM). A Dickcissel found SE Farallon Oct. 6.

An American Tree Sparrow was seen at Nunes Ranch Oct. 16-17 (EHa); Road Forks had one Oct. 19; and one was present at the Lighthouse Oct. 20 (both RS), (three birds or one?). Clay-colored Sparrows made a good showing: twelve arrived in Marin Co. Sept.

25-Oct. 25 (mob), another ten found Pt. Reyes Sept. 25-Oct. 15, and five were in the Princeton area Oct. 4-21 (DKe, PJM, JM, RSTh). Nine Vesper Sparrows reached our area Sept. 30-Oct. 22, but one overshot the coast and landed on a boat to the Davidson Seamount Oct. 5. A Lark Sparrow strayed to a San Francisco residence Sept. 24 (Elf). The Black-throated Sparrow at Abbott's Lagoon remained at least to Sept. 24 (AWi, RS). Another was found along Marshland Road in Alameda Co. Oct. 11-12 (CWo, JM). A Sage Sparrow was at Ano Nuevo State Reserve Sept. 27 (GSt, DLSu, mob). The Lark Bunting at Nunes remained at least through Sept. 22 (WG, AG). Another was at the Mendoza Schoolhouse Sept. 26-Oct. 2 (AME, LJP, DC, JMS). Princeton Airport had one Lark Bunting Oct. 9 (*fide* RSTh). One lingered in Carmel Valley Oct. 12-16 (*fide* SFB), and another was at Hayward Shoreline Oct. 20 (RJR). Twelve White-throated Sparrows came to Marin Co. Sept. 29-Oct. 25 (mob), and thirteen arrived at SE Farallon Oct. 6-17. Nunes Ranch had five Harris' Sparrows Oct. 18, with at least one remaining to Oct. 24 (MLR, GFi, mob). On Oct. 25 there was a single Harris' Sparrow at the Lighthouse (JH), and another at the Fish Docks (EHa).

The earliest longspur this fall was a single Chestnut-collared over the Spaletta Ponds Sept. 26 (SFB). Another was near the Fish Docks Oct. 10 (DAH). Others were found at Spaletta Plateau Oct. 11 (FrT), with up to twenty Oct. 17-19 (MJL). Small numbers of Lapland Longspurs began to arrive at Spaletta Plateau by mid-October, with up to five there Oct. 25 (DDK). Three were at Hayward Shoreline Oct. 22-24 (RJR), one at Abbott's Lagoon Oct. 24 (LJP), and one at SE Farallon Oct. 10. One McCown's Longspur blended into Spaletta Plateau

Oct. 24-26 (JM, mob).

A Bobolink Sept. 24-Oct. 13 (AlH, JM) was joined by another on Oct. 9 (*fide* AlH). Three Bobolinks reached SE Farallon during the period, and single Bobolinks were at Pt. Reyes Oct. 7 (RS), and Oct. 16 (RS, DWm). Three Orchard Orioles were noted this fall: one at SE Farallon Oct. 6, one at Lodi Lake Wilderness Oct. 22 (DGY), and a third at Abandoned Ranch Oct. 23 (RS). A Cassin's Finch was found at Nunes Ranch Oct. 16 (KH, et al.), and three flew over Hawk Hill Oct. 24 (RS). Small numbers of Red Crossbills continued to be seen in Golden Gate Park and Lincoln Park during the period, while flocks of 72 to 100 were seen over Hawk Hill Oct. 20-21 (CLF, RS). Another flock was noted at the Fish Docks Oct. 22 (DDK). Single Evening Grosbeaks were seen at the Lighthouse Oct. 14 (DWm), and Oct. 21 (DSi). Tilden Park had four on Oct. 18 (BO'B). A flock of 31 Evening Grosbeaks flew about Hawk Hill Oct. 20-21, and ten were noted there Oct. 24 (RS).

**Erratum:** The total for Ovenbird in last month's column should be two, rather than one.

**Observers:** Stephen F. Bailey, Bruce Barrett (BBrr), Murray Berner, Geri Brown, Joelle Buffa, Mark Butler (MBu), Kurt F. Campbell, Bill Chilson (BCh), Erin Coler, John Comstock (JCo), Nancy T. Conzett, Debby Cotter, Maryann Danielson, David L. Edwards (DLEd), Al M. Eisner, Michael L. Ezekiel, Carter L. Faust, George Finger (GF), Al Ghiorso, Wilma Ghiorso, Philip E. Gordon, Edward D. Greaves, Helen Green, Keith Hansen, W. Edward Harper, Edward Hase III (EHa), Sean Hayes (SeH), Bob Hirt (BHi), Alice Hoch (AlH), Bob Hogan, David A. Holway, Alan S. Hopkins, Joel Hornstein, Grant Hoyt (GHo), Richard Jeffers, Bob Jenniss, Tom

Johnson (ToJ), Durrell D. Kapan, Dan Keller (DKe), Clay Kempf (CKf), Emily Kenyon, Ted H. Koundakjian, Bruce LaBar, Jeri M. Langham, Peter LaTourette, Earl Lebow, Enid Leff (ELf), Paul E. Lehman, Bill Lenarz (BiL), Donna Lion, Michael J. Lippsmeyer, Hildie Manley, John Mariani, Roger Marlowe (RoM), John McConnell, Robert Merrill, Peter J. Metropulos, L. Richard Mewaldt, Randy Morgan (RMo), Joseph Morlan, Daniel P. Murphy, Scott Murrical (SMu), Dan Nelson, Bob O'Brien, Benjamin D. Parmeter, Jeff Perrone (JPe), Point Reyes Bird Observatory (Farallon report thanks to Jon Curson), John Poole, Lina J. Prairie, Dave E. Quady, Clifford G. Richer, Jean Richmond, Robert J. Richmond, Kathy S. Ritter, Krehe Ritter, Mary Louise Rosegay, Steve Schaeffer (SSc), Shearwater Journeys, Debra Love Shearwater, Larry Silver, Dianne Sierra (DSi), Dan Singer, Jean Marie Spoelman, Rich Stallcup, Robert M. Stewart, Gary Strachan (GSt), David L. Suddjian (DLSu), Roger Thomas (RTh), Ron S. Thorn (RSTh), Francis Toldi (FrT), Whale Center, David Wharton, Anna Wilcox (AWi), David Wimpfheimer (DWm), Chris Wolfe, Claire Wolfe, Dennis Wolfe, Bette Wyatt, David G. Yee, Jan Zagorski. Please report observations to Northern California Rare Bird Alert: 528-0288 or 524-5592.

—HELEN GREEN

Observations Editor

2001 Yolo Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707

## SANCTUARY MONEY WELL SPENT

When Audubon Canyon Ranch was created a telling blow for preservation was the acquiring of Kent Island, in Bolinas Lagoon. This acquisition by ACR activists doomed an intended marina and development proposal that would have destroyed the fragile lagoon. All of you who have been to

ACR know what a treasure was saved by the quick action of those creators of ACR. GGAS played a vital role in those early years and continues to be represented on the Board of ACR. We consider it our Sanctuary (shared with the three other founding chapters, of course).

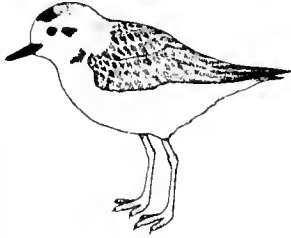
However, when Kent Island was bought, back then, there was one piece that was not acquired. This year, that land-owner decided to sell and gave ACR the first opportunity to purchase. GGAS was proud and pleased to donate \$4,000 needed for this purchase. Marin County matched our amount to reach the final selling price and the land will be preserved under the Marin County Open Space District as part of the Bolinas Lagoon Nature Preserve dedicated to use as a natural area.

We are excited to have available money for our Sanctuary Fund for this acquisition and hope to be able to report very soon on another, major, acquisition. This Fund is of course, generated solely by bequests and donations and all such are warmly welcomed.

—Arthur Feinstein

## THE BACK YARD BIRDER

All year 'round we are treated to the acrobatics of the White-breasted Nuthatch as it searches for insects from our oak trees. These compact birds not only hop up the branches, but use their stiff, short tails and long toes to rotate vertically downward. This insures a meal since descending nuthatches find food in bark crevices overlooked by "up the tree" foraging birds such as creepers and small woodpeckers. They not only search for insects but enjoy



seeds and your suet and peanut butter offerings. In fact, they are among one of many birds which will store food. One greedy sot was observed carrying 38 pieces of suet to a tree where it stuffed them into the bark to be eaten later by other birds. When hungry, a nuthatch can be lured into eating a sunflower seed from your hand where you can appreciate its handsome coloring: a black cap tops its all-white face and breast and its crisp grey back. They have a distinctive low-pitched, rather nasal YANK-YANK with which they call to one another. Their song is described as a rapid series of nasal whistles on one pitch. These birds remain in small family groups until fall. Except in every cold weather, they roost alone in a tree cavity.

In wintertime, the Red-breasted Nuthatch visits our area, sometimes in large numbers. Their high-pitched call suits this smaller bird, sounding like a toy tin trumpet. It prefers conifers and its numbers and range vary greatly, reflecting the seed crop. On last year's Christmas count we found a large flock in mature pine trees where they occasionally darted out for flying insects. Its back is also grey, but its breast is rusty-red and below its black cap it sports a white eyebrow and a bold, black eyeline.

The Pygmy Nuthatch is more localized to mountain areas in California where its range closely parallels ponderosa forest. It is slightly smaller than the 4½ inch Red-breasted, has a grey-brown cap, a creamy breast and a pale spot on the nape of its neck. These fellows form loose family flocks as they roam forests, increasing to large numbers in fall and winter. They roost together at night in tree cavities—up to 100 were found in one tree! This bird's counterpart in the South Eastern U.S. is the Brown-headed Nuthatch, which favors open pine woods.

favors open pine woods.

There are 22 to 25 members worldwide of this family *Sittidae*, but only 4 breed in North America. 'Our' nuthatches are found everywhere there are trees except for the northernmost boreal forests, in tropical palm areas and deserts.

The name "nuthatch" comes from the word "nuthack," which refers to the practice of securing a nut in a niche and hammering it open with the bill. In fact, Brown-headed Nuthatches were observed using a tool in feeding: pieces of bark were held in the bill to flake off another piece of bark thereby uncovering insects.

All nuthatches usually dig a hole in a tree, stump or utility pole for their nests. They might move into an existing woodpecker hole; the Red-breasted and White-breasted will use nesting boxes. Depending on the species, these birds lay between 4 and 10 eggs in the cavities, which have been lined with grasses, mosses, feathers and other materials. They fledge at about 2 weeks after hatching; they then join the family group in the continuing search for food.

Listen for and look for these entertaining birds in your yard.

—MEG PAULETICH

NOTE: Remember when I was told by a reader that John K. Terres book, "Songbirds in Your Garden" couldn't be found? Among my tons of recent catalogues I found it can be ordered from *Casual Living*, Kent Road, P.O. Box 1078, New Milford, Conn. 06776 (Phone (203) 355-3707) Item #7111 \$9.95 + 2.95 shipping and handling. Maybe it would be a gift idea for someone you know.

## MONO LAKE GULLS

The Mono Lake Committee reports that Negit Island and adjacent islets in Mono Lake were surveyed and investigators found 20,600 nests with eggs in late May, with 1,502 on Negit,

more than twice the number last year. Since rising waters have re-covered the land bridge and restored island status since 1982 reproductive success of the Mono Lake gull colony has significantly improved.

This year's dry winter added to LADWP's continuing diversions could cause Mono Lake to drop two vertical feet by autumn. A second dry winter might bring the loss once again of Negit Island and its recently returned gull colony. The water taken by Los Angeles threatens not only the gulls, but an entire ecosystem. The lowering lake level has doubled the salinity and threatens its brine shrimp, crucial food supply for nesting gulls and millions of migratory birds.

## STUDY RELEASES

The National Academy of Sciences' study on the impact of water diversions on Mono Lake's ecosystem was released in August. A state funded study of Mono Lake environment is due to be released in December.

The U.S. Forest Service will incorporate these findings into its management plan for the Mono Lake Basin Scenic Area, and will consider a lake level that will best protect the lake's aesthetic and ecological values.

To that degree things are looking up.

## LAWSUITS

National Audubon, California Trout and the Mono Lake Committee's efforts have transformed dry cobbled washes into productive, living streams. LADWP is under court order to release minimum flows down Mono's largest tributaries, Rush and Vining Creeks, to protect fisheries and public trust values. Wild brown trout, Bald Eagles, Osprey and Dippers have returned to once empty stream beds. Thousands of gulls bathe and drink at the marshy stream mouths. These flows provide one quarter of the water needed to stabilize the lake at a healthy level.

Three lawsuits have been launched to win the stream flows ultimately needed to maintain healthy fisheries and stream dependent values. A trial on Rush Creek has been deferred for two years while the Dept. of Fish and Game conducts a study to determine what these flows should be. The Lee Vining Creek case awaits the appointment of a judge. Finally, an action challenging LADWP's state granted licenses to divert water from any of Mono Lakes's tributary streams is before the State 3rd District Court of Appeals.

The revitalization of Mono Basin Streams affirms an earlier victory: the 1983 State Supreme Court decision upholding the obligation of the state to protect "as far as feasible" the public trust values of Mono Lake. A ruling from the Federal 9th Circuit Court of Appeals will determine whether the re-allocation and sharing of water between Mono Lake and Los Angeles will take place in federal or state court.

### **WRITE LETTERS**

Mono Lake needs the efforts of your pen or typewriter: let Mayor Tom Bradley and Governor George Deukmejian and your state representatives know how you feel, please.

### **CALIFORNIA CHECKLIST AVAILABLE**

The 1987 edition of the *Western Field Ornithologists' California Checklist* is now available at the GGAS office for \$1.25. This list contains 565 species arranged according to the A.O.U. Check-List.

### **WHAT GGAS HAS DONE**

This year GGAS has much to be proud of. Perhaps most exciting and satisfying was the Kent Island purchase (see p. 156), but much more has been done. In cooperation with the seven other Bay Area Audubon chapters (and with Strong and San Francisco Foundation funds) we have funded research and testimony for the State Water Resources Control Board's Bay/Delta Hearings; hearings that will determine the fate of the Bay and how much water will be diverted from it.

We have worked actively to protect the Emeryville Crescent from development, both through Conservation Committee time in advocacy and financial contributions to the Committee for the East Shore State Park. We were also instrumental in ensuring that the recent Emeryville Crescent Marsh clean-up was done with minimal impact to the marsh and its birds. We used Sanctuary Fund money for educational signs to be erected explaining the Marsh's importance, and the importance of not disturbing the birds during their breeding season.

The chapter played an important and active role in assuring that the CALPAW initiative (California Parks and Wildlife) had enough signatures to have a place on the ballot. A contribution of \$1,500 in Sanctuary Funds was made to insure that the North Bay Wetlands were specifically included in CALPAW land acquisition plans. More than three hundred hours of volunteer time was logged by chapter members gathering signatures.

There is, also, our on-going law suit against the Port of Oakland. With the Sierra Club we have spent over \$20,000 in our fight to protect Bay waterfowl and shorebird habitat. It will present

further expenses as it continues.

We conduct fund-raising events for Audubon Canyon Ranch, Point Reyes Bird Observatory and for the Mono Lake Committee, and sometimes other groups. We present monthly membership meetings and occasionally join with other chapters in special presentations. We support the Audubon Adventures program which brings nature education to the classroom. We sponsor the longest continuous and most prestigious ornithology class in the Bay Area: Joe Morlan's San Francisco Community College series. With Joe as producer we also support the Northern California Rare Bird Alert. Perhaps of most interest to our membership, we support one of the most complete field trip programs in the country and publish a distinctive newsletter, *The GULL*.

These and other activities are possible because of generous support from chapter membership and because of volunteers who turn up when there is need. Having an office and a pleasant and effective staff person are essential to chapter effectiveness. A computer is a great help, but it needs knowledgeable humans around it. There are telephones ringing, questions to answer, and routine things that need doing, like keeping the mailing list up to date, and our membership is a very active one.

## GGAS FACES 1988

A few months back I discussed GGAS' financial prospects and National Audubon's new policy for sharing membership dues between National and chapter budgets. I fear that the worst-case scenario is proving to be reality. Early experience is showing that we may receive only 60% of normal funding from the dues sharing formula. A considerable volunteer effort will be necessary to raise funds in other ways

to support chapter activities.

The board has planned several steps to begin to meet these needs. We have expanded our bird seed sale plans, and the most recent effort doubled our previous year's record. We will try more of the same for the next sale. We are planning to conduct a major fund raising raffle in connection with the May Annual Meeting, with the centerpiece a handmade Wetlands Quilt produced by that same team that made our widely known Mono Lake Quilt.

The April Birdathon for Audubon's birthday will be another opportunity to increase the chapter's fund raising efforts.

A board committee on membership and fund-raising has been developing plans to improve chapter performance in these areas. Some members have written expressing concern, offering suggestions and sending contributions. As this is the end of the year, perhaps it is a time for tax deductible gifts in support of the chapter's budget or some of its activities. Gifts earmarked for specific activities are scrupulously routed into restricted funds for legal, refuge, education and endowment accounts. If you would like to give GGAS a Christmas present it would be helpful and appreciated.

—ARTHUR FEINSTEIN

## GGAS SUPPORTS SYMPOSIUM

The Planning and Conservation League will hold its fifth Annual Environmental Legislative Symposium Jan. 20 and 31 at the Clarion Hotel in downtown Sacramento. The purpose is to inform environmental activists of the most urgent issues that will be facing California and its legislature in the year. To develop strategies and priorities a

wide variety of expert panels will consider such topics as Coastal Protection, Ocean Pollution, Planning and Urban Growth, Sustainable Energy and Resources, Transportation and Air Quality, and several others.

Interested members are urged to participate. Information can be had from the GGAS office 843-2222 or PCL at (916) 444-8726.

## BIRDING FOR THE HANDICAPPED

The Library of Congress sponsors a National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (121 Taylor St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20542). We have received from it an announcement of the first in a projected series of leisure activities booklets, *Birding: An Introduction to Ornithological Delights for Blind and Physically Handicapped Individuals*. It discusses the possibilities of birding as a hobby for blind and physically handicapped people.

The introduction states "You will be introduced to a midwestern group of

visually impaired birders; the importance and variety of bird sounds; a selection of recorded and braille books available through your regional and/or subregional library; sources of commercial recordings of bird songs; and a club where you can associate with individuals holding a mutual interest in birding.

Blind individuals often perceive birding as an experience limited to those with sight. However, it is important to know that sight and sound are both independently important in pursuing a knowledge of bird life. Indeed the identification of a specific bird is often made by sound alone. Of course, the caw of a crow or the honk of a goose are noticed, but for the most part birds are ignored by all but a few inquisitive birders. But birds are present in our environment. Only a small number of people take time to study them.

The handbook is available upon request from network libraries or from the Reference Section, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Washington, D.C. 20542.

## GIFTS and BEQUESTS

### FOR GGAS

#### In Memory of

Doris Blakesley

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#### From the Estate of

Minton B. Evans

#### Gift of

Elaine Malone

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The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use for general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society including Audubon Canyon Ranch of which GGAS is a sponsor. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 1550 Shattuck Ave., #204, Berkeley, CA 94709. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull* as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.

## SANDERLINGS, AND OTHERS

The Pan American Shorebird Program is again calling for reports of sightings of color banded birds. Sanderling, Red Knot, Ruddy Turnstone, Black-bellied Plover, Piping Plover, Semi-palmated Sandpiper, and White-rumped Sandpiper are among the millions of shorebirds that migrate northward each spring to breed in North America. The project gathers data to map pathways for conservation and research purposes.

You may see marked shorebirds along the coastline, particularly on sandy beaches and sandflats. The location of leg bands and colored flags provides the key to where they were captured. Please note the color and location of each marker, and especially the leg flags. Then send your observations to the Sanderling Project, Bodega Marine Laboratory, Box 247, Bodega Bay, CA 94923.

## LETTER

As I was walking my tiny dachshund puppy up La Salle St. in Piedmont at about 6:15 Halloween morning, she suddenly jerked at the leash and gave a little cry. At almost the same instant I felt a wind at my back and a Great Horned Owl flew up over my head and landed on a telephone pole ahead of us.

We looked at each other for several moments, the owl rapidly moving its head to look us over closely. As we passed underneath the owl turned to watch us. I walked backward to watch the owl. Suddenly it dropped from the pole and came at us again, chest high, in another attempt to get my dog. It nearly hit me and I had to fend it off by waving it away with my free arm. Quite an experience!

—ANNE WARBUTON  
Oakland

## NEWS FROM THE RANCH

Audubon Canyon Ranch

Shoreline Highway, Stinson Beach (415) 868-9244

Wildlife Sanctuaries & Centers for Nature Education

Under Joint Sponsorship of Golden Gate, Madrone,

Marin and Sequoia Audubon Societies

Rick Baird, Chairman

The ponds at the Bolinas Preserve have been restored to enhance their use as teaching facilities. At the annual meeting the Board of Directors voted to enlarge the pond in Picher Canyon and to re-create Parson's pond in Garden Club Canyon which became a sand bar following the flood of January, 1982. Resident biologist, Ray Peterson said, "It will bring new teaching opportunities and allow us to monitor pond colonization rates."

Two new directors were introduced at the annual meeting. Steve Thal of Kentfield joins the board as an at-large member and Harrison Karr of Novato is a new Marin Audubon Society representative.

Susan de Terra has joined the Bouverie Preserve staff as the new administrative assistant. She is a student at Sonoma State University working for her B.A. in Environmental Studies. She replaces Susan Garcia who retired to pursue her degree in Environmental Education.

The Evolution Seminar held in October at the Ranch was heralded as a "landmark for ACR", "a world class event", "the first of its kind in the state" and "highly successful" by those attending. The two day symposium took up the challenge of creationists on this subject and offered new information on evolution. Did you know that birds are descended from dinosaurs, rather than reptiles? It also discussed classroom teaching techniques.

Co-ordinated by ACR's own Ann Monk the weekend was attended by

more than 70 teachers, most of them working at the secondary level of education. Experts included some of the nation's outstanding evolutionists, Dr. Matt James, Dr. Charles Sibley, Dr. Vincent Sarich, Dr. Devin Padias and Dr. William Bennetta.

Get the New Year off to a great start! Join the Second Annual Resolution Hike on the Bouverie Preserve on January 1, 1988. Leaders will ease you

into the New Year with an easy hike followed by a fine hot lunch including local delectables. To make a reservation, call ACR at (415) 868-9244.

If you miss that hike the first Community Hike of 1988 at the Bouverie Preserve will be on Saturday, January 23. There will be two hikes in February on the 13th and 27th. Be sure to make your reservation early by calling (707) 938-4554.

## GGAS HOLIDAY MART

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### BOOKS\*

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC FIELD GUIDE To The Birds of North America	\$ 19.00	_____	_____
BIRDS OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA An Annotated Field List	\$ 6.00	_____	_____

### CALENDARS\*

AUDUBON BIRDS	\$ 9.50	_____	_____
AUDUBON NATURE	\$ 9.50	_____	_____
AUDUBON ENGAGEMENT BOOK	\$ 9.50	_____	_____
MONO LAKE COMMITTEE	\$ 9.50	_____	_____

### T-SHIRT\*

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<input type="checkbox"/> San Francisco <input type="checkbox"/> Oakland			

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DROLL YANKEE 16"	\$ 28.00	_____	_____
PERKY-PET Hummingbird Feeder	\$ 16.00	_____	_____

\*Price includes postage and tax.

<b>TOTAL</b>	_____	_____
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## — SECOND CLASS MATTER



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THE GULL

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#### NORTHERN CALIFORNIA RARE BIRD ALERT (recorded) (415) 528-0288

Mail for all individuals listed above should be sent to GGAS office.

Send address changes to office promptly; Post office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national \$30 per year (individual); \$38 (family); includes *AUDUBON* Magazine and *THE GULL*; to join, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately \$8 per year; single issues \$1. High school and college student membership \$18 per year. Senior citizen individual \$21, senior citizen family \$23. Associate Membership in Golden Gate Audubon Society, \$10 per year.

The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917,  
and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.

The *Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month, and July 15th for September issue.